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AS TWILIGHT FALLS



LLOYD MIFFLIN



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THE HILLS

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DRAWINGS BY THOS. MORAN, N. A.

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AT THE GATES OF SONG

ILLUSTRATED WITH TEN REPRODUCTIONS IN HALF-
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ESTES & LAURIAT, BOSTON, 1898

ECHOES OF GREEK IDYLS

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO., 1899

THE FIELDS OF DAWN AND LATER SONNETS

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CASTALIAN DAYS

FIFTY SONNETS, WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS

HENRY FROWDE, LONDON AND NEW YORK, 1903

THE FLEEING NYMPH AND OTHER VERSE

SMALL, MAYNARD & CO., BOSTON, 1905

COLLECTED SONNETS OF LLOYD MIFFLIN

BEING A SELECTION OF 350 OF THE AUTHOR'S SON-
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HENRY FROWDE, LONDON AND NEW YORK, 1905

MY LADY OF DREAM

SMALL, MAYNARD & CO., 1906

TOWARD THE UPLANDS

HENRY FROWDE, LONDON AND NEW YORK, 1908

FLOWER AND THORN

HENRY FROWDE, LONDON AND NEW YORK, 1909

AS TWILIGHT FALLS

HENRY FROWDE, LONDON AND NEW YORK, 1918

AS TWILIGHT FALLS

POEMS

BY

LLOYD MIFFLIN

AUTHOR OF

*At the Gates of Song; Collected Sonnets;
Toward the Uplands; Etc.*



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P R E F A C E

Of all the Arts there is no other comparable to the Art of Literature, and the crown and flower of Literature is Poetry.

Having always thought the Sonnet—although the least popular—to be the most distinguished and the most exalted of all forms of English verse, I have devoted my literary life chiefly to its study and creation. I have published more than five hundred Sonnets in the Miltonic, and the true Guittonian form—besides a few showing structural innovations—and I have written, but not published, a large number of others.

The task of creating this amount of Poetry, couched in that most intricate and difficult of forms can be adequately appreciated only by those who have attempted the work, and who have succeeded in doing it.

In this contribution to Sonnet Literature over five hundred themes have been treated.

The Sonnets in the present volume may be considered a further contribution to my other books in which poetry in this form appears : At The Gates of Song ; The Slopes of Helicon ; The Fields of Dawn; Echoes of Greek Idyls ; Castalian Days ; The Fleeing Nymph ; My Lady of Dream ; Toward The Uplands ; Flower and Thorn ; and my Collected Sonnets.

P R E F A C E

In addition to Sonnet creation, I have, at intervals, published over two hundred Lyrics, some of which are included in the present collection.

This is my Last Book. Illness prevents me from doing more. For the work which I have already done the most eminent Literary Authorities, and the magazines and journals of both this country and Great Britain have been exceptionally generous in their praise ; and I feel, profoundly, my indebtedness to them. My note has been pure, and my hearers have been appreciative ; so that, in this parting hour, when, spiritually reminiscent, I dwell upon the years I have passed in close communion with the Muse, I feel that my worship has been reverential ; and I exult in that I have left the sacred garland unsullied on her brow.

This is my Triumph—and my Pride ; it is also both a Challenge and an Invocation to those who may follow me. And now thus suddenly, and prematurely, yet with profound sorrow, I at last take leave of that dear Spirit—The Spirit of Poetry—which has been my Sovereign Guide through so many dream-led years over the meadows of Fancy and upon the Uplands of Imagination.

The fashions in Poetry change, but Youth with its beautiful illusions remains, and Love remains ; and where these, lightened by the Torch of Spirituality, exist, Poetry will abide.

These may not be of the Present, but of the Future, and to these, and to the Future—that dawn-lit Refuge for those who, like myself, salute and withdraw—I leave my work.

L. M.

*Norwood
Sep. 15, 1916*

Cleopatra—What shall we do, Enobarbus?

Enobarbus—Think, and die.

—*Shakespeare*

DEDICATION

TO GEORGE BROWN MIFFLIN

When they were young, both your father and mine, who were relatives, loved poetry and wrote it, and mine, in 1835 even published a volume of Lyrics. In you and in me since boyhood days, though we have been separated by distance, poetry has been a passion. In me it has been a consuming flame, and in each of us the flame still burns ;—and so to you, Old Friend, who have been a trusted critic of my poetry for the last twenty years, and, through numerous letters whose suggestions—poetic, subtile, and singularly original—have long since placed me under Pierian obligations, to you I now offer these belated thanks.

And let us, as the twilight deepens, fervently thank the Muse for the exquisite hours which she, in her beneficence has bestowed upon us—hours in which she made us oblivious of the world whose material boundaries ceased for us to exist, while enthralled by that laborious pleasure which is hers ;—so that, as I have elsewhere written :

“ Time swept beneath us as a flying road.”

L. M.

*Norwood
September, 15, 1916*

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AS TWILIGHT FALLS

TO THE POETS

MEN named her once, in far Hellenic days,
The sacred Muse, for power was hers, divine;
She fired great Homer's lips, and, 'mid the kine,
Laureled Theocritus, whose pipe still plays
On capes of blue . . . Ah, Poets, who shall raise
A pæan to the Muse in her decline?
How will ye meet, if ye her claims resign,
The incriminating splendor of her gaze?

High aims are yours;—to clasp the spirit gleams,—
Mould them, immutably, in forms apart;
Poems to weld,—red from the human heart;
Annunciation of ethereal themes,
And unimagined, World-fraternal dreams,—
Fit consummation of the poet's art.

SHIPS THAT GO DOWN ON THE DEEP

THEY sail away with streaming pennons brave
From sheltered ports,—a thousand ships a year;
Boldly they go, nor prescience have, nor fear
Of fate that draws them to an ocean grave.

These voyagers no frantic prayers may save:
The wrecks, adrift, are but their wandering bier;
They lie, beyond the touch of mortal tear,
Tombed in the vast of the sepulchral wave.

O eager Youth! that, from the harbors fair,
Start for the ports of Promise without fail,
Will ye withstand the battering storm and strife,
And reach the goal? or, stricken with despair,
Be,—like the doomed hulks with tattered sail,—
Whelmed to oblivion on the sea of Life?

AT THE TRYSTING PLACE

THE LOVER SPEAKS

THE gold of Evening into grayness fades;
And now the Twilight spreads her sheltering plumes
 And shields me with her shades,
E'en as some brooding dove's
Are folded o'er her nestlings which she loves,
 Far in the forest glooms.

The crescent dreams in branches of the fir,
And o'er the woodland path the stars arise
 To light the way for her;
The wild grass rustles near;
And then a step,—and all my heaven is here,—
 Love, with her longing eyes!

THE VENICE OF OUR YOUTH

FAR off the City lies,—her domes of white
Touched by the rising sun. As some fair maid,
She blushes at her lover's kiss, now laid
Upon her brow. Only a poet might
Conjure such sea-throned vision of delight;
Noise and harsh clangor do not there invade
Streets that are silent as a Druid glade,—
O Rose of Dawn and Lily of the Night!

And now the evening gilds the gondolier
Where the inverted City, mirrored, floats;
And o'er the shipping slowly climbs the moon,
While masts are motionless on all the boats,—
Still as the Lombard-poplars when the air
Stirs not a ripple on the hushed Lagoon.

JUNE ON THE CONESTOGA

WITHIN the shadow which the foliage throws
The drowsing cattle by thy waters dream ;
The white arms of the trees above thee gleam,
And on thy slopes the ripening harvest glows;
From meadows of the hay the fragrance blows
Sweeter than all Arabia ! . . . What a theme
For reverie thou art, O pastoral stream,
Idyllic in thy beauty and repose !

Nine arches hath thy bridge of classic mould—
One for each Muse—clear-mirrored on thy breast;
Amid this quiet of the evening hours
Tranquil thou flowest toward yon waste of gold,
Where, shadowed 'gainst the fulgence of the West,
The stately College lifts her clustered towers.

THE BOULDERS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA

SUBMERGED BY THE GREAT POWER DAM

AUGUST, 1911

WHERE are those guardians of the rushing stream,—
The river-sculptured rocks of yesterday?
That herd of Lions, couchant for their prey,
Roaring above the freshets, made it seem
As if the waters lived! . . . Men's disesteem
And Mammon-greed have sunk them deep away
Beneath a wide monotony of gray,—
Lost to the world as some drowned poet's dream!

Oh, Thou, retard *our* fate! Give yet the thrills,
The torrent-shock, the impact, and the swirl
Of rushing life, and glimpse of beckoning hills!
Sink *us* not yet! lovers of sky and sun,
We graying men, who crave awhile the whirl
And rapture of the rapids as they run!

A POET PASSES

THE Shadow brooded o'er him, as he lay
Waiting the end; but far beyond the gloom
He saw the clustered domes with glory dim
In air-built citadels. Celestial slopes
Beamed with lost faces, found; and tides of song
Swept from the morning stars, as faint he saw
A shadowy Form move to him, down a path
Filled with excessive light; then softly came
The Presence, veiled, and called him, and consoled:
As when our noon-day sun, breaking through clouds,
Beats on a glaring plain of burnished snow,
And from his wake of blazing silver pours
Unearthly splendor, so, in brighter light,
He saw Death moving to him on the gleam.

WHEN THE GREEN RYE WAVES

WHEN the rye is tall as Marian's head
By the path as she comes to me,
And the rose in her hair—the rose of red—
Is laved by the bearded sea,
It is then to the trysting place we hie
Where the gray-green billows go over the rye

There are deeper joys—the lure of her eyes—
And the warmth of her loving kiss,
But after the rapture—after the sighs,
A lingering pleasure is this,
In the shade at her darling feet to lie
As the rolling billows go over the rye.

WHEN THE GREEN RYE WAVES

Tho' the white cloud calls, yet the sea of green
With its wonderful waves is fair;
Tho' the red-wing hovers o'er head to feign
That his nest in the grass is there,
Yet our hearts are set on the lights that fly
O'er the magical reach of the waves of rye.

And I ask will she follow me clear of the Day
Out over that ocean of green,
To an isle that basks in the Far-Away,
That only lovers have seen,
And deep in her eyes is the sweet reply
As we drift afar o'er the sea of rye.

OCTOBER DAYS AT HOME

RESTLESS and strange, the birds now dream of flight
To far savannas, as the partridge whirs
From briery uplands near. With chestnut burrs
The squirrels are busy, leaping in delight
From limb to limb, where jays at dizzy height,
Shrill their harsh challenge, while the zenith blurs
The swift-winged geese,—aerial voyagers,—
Arrowing aloft to lose themselves in light.
In Indian-file the turkey leads her brood,
Eying the hawk above. From hollow boughs
The tapping flicker darts on golden wings;
The red-bird long has sought the deeper wood,
While from the elm, anear the olden house,
The oriole's woven cradle empty swings.

STUDENT-DAYS IN ITALY—A RESTROSPECT

THE Evening gilds the church-dome far away
High on the hills. The sun is almost set,
And Alban mountain-tops are roseate yet
With vernal snow.—Stretched far in long array,
Behold the toilers at the end of day,
Where slowly coming, tired and labor-bowed,
One sees them dimly in a rising cloud
Of golden dust along the Appian Way.

In field apart, responsive, mate to mate,
Lone contadini sing below the pine;
The panniered donkeys, orange-laden, wait
Beside the Trattoria 'neath the vine,
And there the artist-travelers, now elate,
Chat o'er their Parmesan and Asti wine.

H E L I O S

My chariot-team, whirled on by flaming wings,
Beats the dawn-vapor into flakes of fire;
My rays made Memnon murmur as a lyre:
Barbarian hosts and their imperious Kings
Knelt by mine altars with burnt-offerings:
Shrouded in scarlet and in gold attire
Each eve I perish on my sumptuous pyre,
Yet every morn my bright renascence brings.
Innumerable orbs illume the rolling Earth
When I, at dusk, withdraw from view of men,
But star and planet never meet my sight:
I am that Splendor of primeval birth
Which flushed the yawn of Chaos, and since then
For me—till systems crash—there is no Night.

LOOKING AGAIN AT THE FAR-OFF HILLS

WITH falcon-wings have flown the two score years
Since here I trod the heights, yet now I gaze
Entranced, for that blue loveliness betrays
No age,—like some perpetual Bride who bears
Unfading wreaths of bloom, it yearly wears
Fresh garlands woven of cerulean haze;
These dreamy hills, well loved in happier days,
Seem even lovelier as my twilight nears.
Tense life hath taken her relentless toll,
For to myself I turn, and see the truth
Furrowed upon my brow, and in the soul
Deep scars; corrosive time hath wrought the change;
And yet yon blue, insensate, mountain-range
Defies mutation with perennial youth.

THE APHRODITE OF HANS SCHULER

O POET-SCULPTOR of Hellenic themes
Who wanderest through the dim Italian vales,
Thy marbles wing us to immortal dales
Where gods recline by amaranthine streams.
Honor to him, who, by marmorean dreams
So carven that the ancient prestige pales,
Lifts us from out the sordid, and regales
The famished spirit with diviner gleams.

• • • • •

Mother of Love!—nay, Love itself thou art;
Born of the Sea,—sea-flower of fire and foam;
Wave-pillowed head ; the sweet breast dolphin-
tossed;
Thy loveliness—a pang that pierces home!
Oh, poignant is thy beauty, for the heart
Sees what it yearned for and forever lost!

THE CHILDREN COMING FROM THE MILLS

THE troop of children that should be at play
Romping through upland fields from morn to eve,
Or studious at the schools,—can we believe
Them slaves, thralls of the soulless looms that slay?
Shall young life have no sun?—no holiday?
But, standing at the shuttle, endless weave,
Straining for others still without reprieve,
Strangers to joy—wearing their prime away?
Now youth's fair flower is trampled as a weed,
And pallid children show the care-worn face,—
That index of a future stunted race:
The whirring shuttles suck the toilers' blood;
Youths left emaciate by the cogs of Greed,
And budding Maidens marred for motherhood.

ON THE HEADLANDS

THE INVASION OF BRITAIN, UNDER BOADICEA,
BY SUETONIUS, 62 A.D.

THROUGH twilight mist the West, with lurid red,
Flushed all the uplands. There, in trance I stood
And watched the Vision, saw the ensanguined feud
Rage on the summits, whence was heard the tread
Of conquerors coming and of captives led,
And moanings of a mangled multitude,
Where, 'mid the carnage on that field of blood,
I saw the Warrior Queen uncharioted.

The Sea, remembering, sobbed around her capes
Where ghostly Kings, bewildered at their doom,
Sought the lost sceptre and the crumbled throne:
Then, in the air, triumphant spectral-shapes
Arthurian, passed in panoply and plume,
Led by the phantom-trumpets, faintly blown.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

ANGEL and woman, nearing ninety years,
We lay this amaranth flower at her feet,—
The wide world's love,—a tribute richly meet,
For mid the cannons' carnage and the spears'
She moved heroic, and the soul reveres
Her saintly ministrations, heavenly sweet;
Science to love she joined, and did entreat
Death back to life, and checked a million tears.
At Balaklava, through the dreadful camp
Miles long of maimèd men, her lot was cast
Through shrieking, bleeding wrecks of sword and ball;
And in night hospitals, as on she passed,
The wounded blessed our "Lady of the Lamp,"—
The dying kissed her shadow on the wall.

REFLECTED JOY

“To look on happiness through others’ eyes,”
So mused I, not without a secret pain,
For lovers passed me in the twilight lane,
As arm in arm they murmured soft replies.
How sweetly Love can gild the winsome lies
Whispered in Youth! But oh! to us in vain
He calls, if in our heart that barb remain,—
“To look on happiness through others’ eyes.”
Joy is a jewel-casket locked to Age,
Youth and Love only have the golden key;
Bliss is a bubble, bursting as it flies:
Now evening comes, and what is left to me?
This is the pathos of life’s pilgrimage,—
“To look on happiness through others’ eyes.”

TO THE STATUE

“DESCENDING NIGHT”

I LOVED the Day, but now the dim Night clings
Close to my soul. Lo, through the evening air
Night comes,—naked and pure—divinely fair—
Slow-floating downward on those brooding wings!
She is the Dove of Darkness, and she brings
The olive, Peace, into the Tents of Care;
Oh, let the raven mystery of her hair
Enshroud me with occult imaginings!
O Night, if thou art beautiful as this,
Let thine arms fold me till my passing breath
Dies into dreams wherein the Spirit rests:
Numb me with rapture of thy Lethean kiss;
Lean close above me,—touch me with thy breasts,
Make me thy bridegroom in the Halls of Death.

THE LITTLE ORCHARD ON THE HILL

COULD any slope be lovelier, e'en in May,
Than this, bedecked in peach-bloom, where is seen
The clustered pink against a floor of green,
As if the hill were one superb bouquet?
Faint airs of Persia linger in each spray;
Here Beauty, reigning in this rare demesne,
Trails her rich garments like an orient queen,
All roseate as the clouds at dawn of day:
But when the lithe boughs, laden to the tips
With golden ovals pulped with luscious mell,—
When crimsoned globes invite the eager lips
With fruity honey, then, across the years,
The Eden Gardener, wheresoe'er he dwell,
Must look with longing on the nectared spheres!

WELCOME ARE THESE

WELCOME to us such harbingers as these:

The murmur of the honey-laden bees;

Welcome the warbled song and myriad wing

In Dryad woodlands gemmed by April rain;

The dove's soft moan of joy; the slope that glows

When laurel-blossoms make each bush a rose:

Ah! dear to us and tragic is the Spring—

The Spring that we shall seldom greet again!

THE LOVER BY THE STREAM

O PURLING waters from yon mountain woods,
Wind through the meadow on these summer days,
Curve, and re-curve, in seeming senseless maze
 That few may understand,
But when rude March shall bring the rushing floods
 Thy bends shall block the tide
 Of devastation wide,
 And save the fertile land:
Curve. silver stream and save the meadow land!

Here oft a maiden comes at eventide
To call the cattle from the pasture deep:
If one should 'neath her modest wimple peep,—
 If one should touch her hand,
Let down the bars, and linger by her side,
 Would such things do her wrong ?
O curve, and wind along,
 And carol o'er the sand,—
Wind, happy stream, and save her father's land!

THE LOVER BY THE STREAM

We stroll along the margin in a dream,—
Was ever farmer's daughter half so fair?
And in the twilight of the lilyed wier
We loiter, hand-in-hand.

O straighten not the windings, dreamful stream,
For I should then have less
Of her shy loveliness:
Wind on o'er pebbly sand,—
Bend, lyric stream, and save her father's land!

Her grizzled parent stroked his beard and said,—
"Meadow and cottage shall be hers in Spring,—"
For April blooms shall bear a marriage ring
For some one's pretty hand!
O winding stream remember when we're wed,
Sing ever 'round her feet,
And keep her pure and sweet,
As is thy golden sand;
Wind, darling stream, and save her bridal land!

TO PENNSYLVANIANS ON THE DAMMING
OF THE SUSQUEHANNA

SHALL your true birth-right in this stream be sold?
Your River dammed, by stealth, as in the night?
And yet no protest made? no sign of fight?
Cowards! The Trappers would have risen of old
In their primeval manhood,—*they* were bold,—
They would have bled for this riparian right;
But you, though weaponed with the ballot's might
Tamely submit—sheep sheared within the fold!
If men are craven, as they seem to be,
Submitting to such robbery at their door,
Thou mighty Stream! alone vent thou thy wrath:
Rise! till a thousand torrents thundering roar
Headlong, and in thy wild, avenging path,
Sweep this abomination to the sea!

THE MOUNTAIN LAUREL AS THE STATE FLOWER FOR PENNSYLVANIA

SEARCH all the gardens, every reedy fen,
Upland and meadow where wild nature teems,
The tangled thicket where the torrent gleams
In thunderous foam adown the forest glen,
And thou shalt find no flowering denizen
Equal our Kalmia, robed in rosiest white,
Whose beauty is a pang of pure delight,
Touching, through loveliness, the heart of men.

Unfading Laurel! symbol of our hopes,
Immortal Dryad of the greenwood gloom,
Long mayst thou haunt these Appalachian slopes
And be our sovereign State's resplendent Flower,
Beauteous as morning in thy roseate bloom,
Strong as our mountains in enduring power !

TO THE SUBMERGED ROCKS AND ISLANDS ON THE SUSQUEHANNA

FAREWELL! ye wooded islands, never more
Shall in your shade the Youth and Maiden woo!
Ye rocks, that jutted from the rushing blue,
Within whose eddies dripped the lover's oar,
A last farewell! Ye currents that of yore
Like maddened horses furious dashed, and threw
Your white manes to the air, farewell to you!
Forever mute your danger-luring roar!

Here, as I drift, no rapture doth awake
From hills or moving landscape, for my heart
Lingers beneath where I was wont to roam;
And memory sees, as on some sunken chart,
Down in that inert bottom of the lake,
The scarred old boulders yearning for the foam!

THE LATER GLOW

THE mind should ripen with the mellowing years,
E'en as an Autumn tree. The evening sail
Gathers the glow. Quest of the Holy Grail
Is not for youth, untried by love and tears.
Death's cataract roars, but still the poet hears
Not Death's voice, but a voice beyond the veil;
The gray wings of the Spirit do not quail,
But throb for finer ether of the Spheres.

Shall coming age deflower me by disuse ?
Ah no! e'en as the rich exotic rose
Flames Winter into June, so shall the Muse
Beneficent, my season still prolong,—
And glowing on my wintry days, disclose
A later blooming of the flower of Song.

TWILIGHT BY THE DRUID'S STONE

DAY's heart was stabbed, and now the stain of red
Smote on the promontory as a flood,
Bathing the moorland in the misty blood
Of sunset. Through the dusk I heard the tread
Of hoary Druids, who the victim led
To reeking altars in the ghostly wood;
And all the weird and tremulant solitude
Was thronged with visions of the ancient dead.
There Priests I saw, white-robed, at mid of night,
Sever the mistletoe with blade of gold;
These wore the "serpent's egg," as sign of might,
Made of the poisonous spittle of the snake;
And some, the outcasts, unto whom none spake,
Wandered, forever silent, near the fold.

THE SLEEPING ENDYMION

RINEHART'S STATUE OVER HIS OWN GRAVE

THE moonlight, as a lover's lingering kiss
Falls on his placid brow. In tender gloom
The young, brown body glimmers from the tomb—
Dim as a fading star . . . Rest—rest it is ;
And oh, if sleep be beautiful as this
What must the waking be! . . . No cares consume;
With him is youth eterne, undying bloom,
And thoughts unending of perennial bliss.
The lips are parting, and we feel the breath
A sweetness on the air . . . Will he arise
And touch again his Dorian flute ? He seems
Some fair immortal form of alien skies
Abiding here,—a symbol, not of Death,
But Sleep irradiate with desired dreams.

THE CHOSEN SITE

Not on the headland cliff above the sea,
Enforced to hear the sullen lion-roar
Of caverend waves: not on the languid shore
Where the palm-fringedè sands reach endlessly
Teased by the foam: not where the stunted tree
Grapples the barren crag, while torrents pour
Their veils of mist, and mountain eagles soar: —
Not e'en a heathery moorland home for me!
But by the bouldered streamlet's lyric flow,
Be my abode, whence, to the beetling crest,
Infrequently at sunset I may stroll
To hear the hill-top phantom bugles blow,
And, for the moment, balm the troubled soul
With unaccustomed splendors of the West.

BEYOND THE MAIN

I CLOSE my eyes, and from the hills of home
View Italy again: the fallen frieze;
The templed vales and haunts of Dryades;
The vast campagna and the looming dome;
The wraith that lingers o'er a vanished Rome,—
All rise in glamour flushed with memories;
And from the Ischian Isles the Neriad-seas
Call to my youth across the syren foam.

The air is tremulous with a spirit-tone
Of by-gone lyres. I hear the phantom throng:
The rhythmic thunder of the Mantuan's lines;
Lorn Petrarch sighing in the Appenines;
And as he treads Ravenna's pave, alone,
Again the Tuscan chants his deathless song.

BY HER DEAR HAND

WHILE ranging far in the Pierian sky,
Sudden some Power smote me with a sword
Whose flame of blackness quenched my every word,
And cast me helpless where the stricken lie;
Hope fled afar,—it seemed my fate to die;
On the gray air my pleadings I outpoured,—
No promise echoed back—no answering chord,
And Death on ashen wing was hovering nigh.
Then that dear Spirit who loved me at my birth,—
Who solaced life with her melodious tone,—
Broke through the gloom, and stood like wingèd Dawn;
Seeing me crushed, she left her airy throne,
And, as a sister, led me back to Earth,
When dreams returned that for a space had gone.

O LINGER YET

ROSE-BLOOM and lilies that no frost can kill;
Visions of youthful grace that yet persist;
Maidens with pleading arms at twilight tryst,
Ye were the lures that made the young heart thrill:
For you the passion, unrequited still;
O vanished lips that loved us, never kissed,
Only the worn heart knows what it hath missed—
How Heaven itself can not that dream fulfill!

Dear wraiths of Maidens bearing fragrant urns
Exhaling incense of remembered years
When we, in shadowy walks of woodland ferns
Poured out our first-love in those tender vows,
Ah, linger yet, as fast our twilight nears,
Oh, cheer the heart where embered fire burns !

O PRESENT LIFE

THE world is filled with beauty ; 'tis a rose
That wafts its fragrance through the air around,
As each day bursts—a flower from underground—
To fold into itself at evening's close.

This ache of loveliness is sweet to those
Who, life-long, suffer some intemporal wound ;
The morn is consolation, and the night, profound,
Offers her starlit spaces of repose.

Enough for me the usual day unrolled,
Though the long road be dimmed with dust of care,—
Though Love be flown on pinions dawn-empearled:
O Present-Life, chalice of things most fair,
Leave me not yet—not yet—all unconsoled,
And sad with promise of a better world.

W H I T H E R

SHALL He, the chargers of Whose chariots are
Suns and their systems shod with effluence,—
Shall He not know the pathway of our star
And through the ages guide it surely thence?

Shall He not drive the chariots of the Worlds
To reach at last their predetermined goals,
Where, past the endless æons, still unfurls
Elysium longed for by our trembling souls?

God, the Worlds' Gardener, sees within earth's halls
Life as a bud that flowers but in To Be;
His will is as a lamp that lights the walls
Down the dim canons of Eternity.

NOVEMBER PASSES

HER torch, once flaming, is inverted low,
And withered beauty follows in her trail;
Her voice drifts faintly from the leafless dale,
And ghastly pallor crowns that beauteous brow;
For she, who on each waiting woodland bough,
Hung gonfalons of crimson, through the vale
Goes reft of splendor, wavering and frail,
Yet queenly still, although dethronèd now.

I hear her sandals brush the fallen leaves
In lonely valleys dim and far away;
Her sceptre gone, she wanders o'er the plains
Wrapped in her fluttering robes of hadden-gray;
Ghost-like she passes where the lost wind grieves,—
One with the spirit of lamenting rains.

THE LITTLE LADIES OF JAPAN

IN A GARDEN OF TOKIO

SWEET souls serene, whom nothing can embroil,
Submissive, dutiful, who only know
To serve and love and let the great world go,—
Ye are the roses by the road of toil.
Angelic Indolence! How true a foil
To modern woman's ceaseless rush and show.
Dear little Ladies of fair Tokio
Better your languor than our loud turmoil.
Ah, flowery-kirtled girls with cheeks of tan,
You charm my days, and in my dreams, allure!
Ye dusky maidens, daintily demure,
In tiny gardens sipping cups of tea,—
O cherry-blossom Daughters of Japan,
Take the blown kiss now wafted o'er the sea.

— A V E N G E D

I SAW that dark soul in the moving throng;
A sword leaped from mine eye;
I slashed the bloodless mask who did me wrong,—
Blazed on her, and swept by.

Then felt I as superb Aldabaran feels
When, sudden, in the night
A dead star passes, and in scorn he wheels,
Spurning the corpse—with light.

WATER-CRESS

AT A LITTLE DINNER IN PARIS

Reminiscent of 1872

SEEING the water-cress in Paris where
We dine together, she alone and I—
And she is charming with her breeding high!—
I quite forget my lady debonair,
Forget the silver glitter and the glare.
The *garçon* fades . . . A mist is in mine eye . . .
Something is wrong,—and tho' the wine I try,
Chateau Yquem is but *vin ordinaire*.

Ah me! Ah me! at home again I seem;
Again with you I tread the Summer air
And watch the sunlight kiss your glowing hair:
Oh, let me have once more my golden dream,—
You—sweetheart—you, long lost, that with me there
Waded for cresses in the Indian stream!

A WINTER SUNSET

THE SUSQUEHANNA

FAR off the great stream held the blinding glare,—
A line of bleak effulgence so intense
It seemed to lift the River, and to bend
The level radiance upward; while the woods,
That rose between us and that blazing streak
Were severed and dismembered,—cut across—
By that long, horizontal sword of light,
Which, made more dazzling by the river-ice,
Hurled javelin flashes—scintillating darts
Insufferably brilliant, blinding us;
Then, turning from this flare, we faced the East,
Not unamused by that mild, lesser orb,
The troubled moon, plump faced, that doleful smiled
Inanely toward us from a lilac sky.

F O R G O T T E N

THE valiant deed, the glorious dream,

Oblivion will enshroud:

To life—a bubble on the stream—

How brief the span allowed!

Forgotten is the breath of Fame—

Forgotten as a fading cloud,

The glamour and the name.

Forgotten as a last year's nest,

Wherein the brooding dove

Kept warm with beatings of her breast

The firstlings of her love.

For rapturous song, and burning word,

And all the splendid fame thereof

Will never more be heard.

Forgotten as an orphan's grave

That never knew a tear,

Where lonely mountain grasses wave

Among the brambles sere;

Where e'en the homeless never walk,—

The only thing that cometh near,

The shadow of the hawk.

AFTER THE STORM

THE cloud-barred sunset, o'er the wooded height,
Blazed on, 'mid rolling thunder;
Then, with encrimsoned sword of dazzling light,
Day slashed the woods asunder.

Night fell: the squadrons of the sun were fled,—
Gray ranks of warriors wounded;
From far-off trumpets on that field of red
Rout and defeat were sounded.

But now the Moon, freed from her cloudy bars,
In robes the heavens lend her,
Appears as Peace among her pallid stars
And silvers all with splendor.

A MAN'S SONG FROM THE WINTRY SHORE

Two men abreast, and though touched with gray,
Yet buoyant hearts have we;
And we love the white-maned Horses' neigh
As they romp along the sea!

When the petrel, blown by the tempest-wings,
Beats up against the gale,
And the syren-harp of the rigging sings,
We thrill to the bellied sail.

As we bend to the storm on the beach today
No waft from the South crave we,
But the crisp keen cut of the tingling spray
And tang of the bitter sea!

We laugh in the face of the blustering tide,
Storm-beat, but a joyous pair,
As we drink to the drones of the fireside
In wine of the pungent air!

THE MORNING HOUR IN NEW YORK

I, from the meadows of Song,
Fresh from the clover dales,
Am here 'mid the rushing throng,
Regretting the fragrant vales.

For there the spirit, Repose,
Dwells in the shadowy pass;
Beauty is there with her rose,—
Leisure, a-dream in the grass.

But yet, 'tis a heartening sight,
It was wrong to repine,
The rush has a touch of delight,
And the fervor is fine!

Oh, the Doers of Things are they,—
No shirkers among them all,
For Duty is calling to-day,
And they surge to the call!

“SLOWLY THE SPLENDOR COMES”

FAINT music drifts among the Autumn boughs,—
Some one is coming far across the leas
Where haze makes dreamland of the fields, and bees
Murmur the livelong day. The wading cows
Move lazily along, or stop to browse;
The orchard, from its golden-fruited trees,
Spreads flickering shadows where the flocks, at ease,
Rest in the shade and indolently drowse.
And now, mid bronzing leaves, the silent jay
Finds his lost bugle and salutes the air
From tawny valleys rich with tented corn;
Slowly the splendor comes, as far away,
With grape-leaves wreathed in his sun-browned hair,
October, loitering, winds a phantom horn.

THE STATUE

How soiled the wreath which oft that strumpet, Fame,
 Puts on the brazen forehead of the base!
Men lie, and plunder, and betray their race;
 Then the State's coffer raises to their name
A statue,—let it mark eternal shame,
 And obloquy, dishonor and disgrace.

THE WAR LORD

THE larks had nestlings; dreaming of no hurt,
 Joyous they thrilled their love-song overhead:
Back to his watch,—savage, erect, alert,—
 The brigand Hawk returned with talons red.

THE DEAD POET

HIS heart, a hidden fountain, whence there ran
 Through the hushed tenor of reclusive days,
Deep love of Nature, and the Soul of man,
 In stately song and in melodious lays.

THE LOCUST TREES IN BLOOM

AFAR along the winding way
The towering Locusts grow,
Where zephyrs shower the blossomed spray
In flurries as of snow.

' Neath airy galleries wove of light
The lanes are all perfume,
While in the blue the clustered white
Makes miracles of bloom,

As though some unseen Ariel-hand,
To work a wonder rare,
By magic of his elfin wand
Strewed flowers in the air.

And high, the bowery limbs among,
A tanager is seen,
A wayward troubadour whose song
With love-notes thrills the green.

THE LOCUST TREES IN BLOOM

And now, beneath the hum of bees,
Within the quiet land,
Two lovers meet beside the trees
And wander, hand-in-hand.

O tenderest time for old and young,
Your voice is in mine ear;
And gentlest Solace finds no tongue
To stifle back the tear.

To us, more precious is each hour,—
The remnant dearer grows;
'Twas Youth that spurned the dewy flower,—
We hoard the faded rose.

Ye days of love and bloom, now gone,
Ye bring a pang of pain,
For if we walk, we walk alone
Within the Locust lane!

OUR SAILORS' GRAVES

CALIFORNIA MEMORIAL DAY

I FLUSHED for shame,—I thought about his grave:
No loved ones watch his mound with tender sighs;
No place on earth for him who for us dies—
Our patriot Sailor! Ah, how deck the brave
Who slowly sink to some dim ocean cave!
O where shall love, looking through Memory's eyes,
Strew flowers for him—for him who, drifting, lies
Whelmed in the dark unfathomable wave?

Take heart! our Sailors gone—that silent host
Far from our sight—rest not ungarlandèd;
The Daughters of the West, each year in May,
In tribute, far along the Golden Coast,
Scatter fresh roses on the glorious Bay,
And Ocean garlands every hero's head!

T H E U N R E V E A L E D

THE lure that hangs above the unseen heights
Comes from the gathered mist. The unknown sea
Enthralls us by her vast profundity;
It is the cryptic which the soul invites:
The Muse ascends in her immortal flights
To wing the borders of infinity:—
Mother of all the Faiths, thou, Mystery,
The sealèd fountain of divine delights!

Shall man dissect the violet? Must we tear
The precious rose of poësy apart
That it reveal its beauty? Shall we wear
Outside our breast the bruised human heart
Nor veil the sacred fount? . . . Oh, rather shroud
The poet's meaning in the golden cloud!

T H E P A I N T I N G

WHAT makes the painting foremost of its kind?

Color and composition nobly planned,—
The falcon vision of the brooding mind,—
Then swift precision of the brain-led hand.

T H E L U R E

THAT fine, diurnal wheel the spider weaves
Is like the web Hope spins for men:
When Fate, each morn, no vestige of it leaves,
Hope spins the subtle lure again.

T H E S O L E M N I T E S

WHEN joy arrives their faces show no flash
Of happiness, but still are draped in gloom,
As, in the Spring, with trees in snowy bloom,
Come the black blossoms of the Ash.

THE LAST SONG OF RAMON DE MIROVAL,
TROUBADOUR

THOUGH long my youth hath flown, and now
 The gloaming darkly gleams,
I feel the morning flush my brow
 From out the dale of dreams.

Though lone I wander far and wide,
 A Presence near me seems,
A gentle wraith is by my side
 Born in the vale of dreams.

A spirit calls me from afar
 Across the phantom streams
And beckons as the morning star
 Above the dale of dreams.

My twilight comes; the night is near,
 Yet brightly memory beams,
And brings again the smile—the tear
 From out the vale of dreams.

Though youth is dead, yet in the ^wheart
 The morning rapture gleams;
My spirit dwells with one apart
 Within the dale of dreams.

THE DRIZZLING DAY

I WALK the glistening porch, but all in vain
Hope for the sun. Drip—drip from oaken sprays,
While every bole grows darker in the haze,
And lyric spouts announce their low complain.

The downward smoke that leaves the rumbling train
Hugs the dimmed hill. Through veils of misty grays
I see the distant herd contented graze
In dull indifference to the dismal rain.

I feel the leaden time; I need the cheer,—
Even the solemn cheer of setting suns;
Yet still the mind on brighter prospects runs:
If skies are dark, lo, to the shrine I turn;—
Doth not the torch of song forever burn
Within the minstrel's home, though days are drear?

STARLIGHT BY THE SEA

I DEEMED the rose of morning-twilight sweet,
That blossoms but to fade,
I loved the noon-day shimmering o'er the wheat,
Seen from the beechen shade.

The clarions of the sunset called me there
To watch through tranced hours,
The conflagration and the dying flare
Of cloudy Trojan towers.

Now, by the Sea, I troth my soul to Night,
My bride shall be a star,
Her lure shall lift me to her wingèd height
Beyond the phantom bar.

AT THE DAY'S END

THE evening sky is golden
Along the mountain rim,
And all the wild-wood olden
Is growing dusk and dim.

What rapturous notes are soaring
Above the underbrush?
It is the soul outpouring
Of some love-mated thrush.

Such love is his to send her,
So touching and so dear—
So sweet—so wild—so tender
It pains the heart to hear!

.
The West burns down to embers;
The song sinks faint and low;
And the lonely heart remembers
A twilight long ago!

ON BEING INVITED TO WINTER IN CALIFORNIA

Our boyhood's River here from shore to shore
With unrelenting ice is bound;
The wind, by islands where we ranged of yore,
Howls like a famished hound.

Your letter bids me to your orange groves
With aureate splendor bending low,
And lures to azure inlets and to coves
Of more than sapphire glow;

Entices me to orchards where one sees
The turbaned Hindoo, lithe and mute,
Perched in the branches of your olive-trees
Picking the purpled fruit;

ON BEING INVITED TO WINTER IN CALIFORNIA

A clime where one may pass the livelong day
'Mid fragrance of December flowers,
With wandering airs of ozone from the Bay
To vivify the hours;

Where you can see each blushing sunrise peep
Above the cloud-born waterfall;—
Each evening watch the belfry-shadows creep
Up the adobe wall;

Far off, the cañon and the cliff are yours
Where the undaunted eagles reign,—
Yours, where the Mesa rises and allures
Above the endless plain;

While I, through frosted windows, see the hills
Whiten beneath my sunset view;
On bloomless paths beside the frozen rills
My thoughts return to you:

ON BEING INVITED TO WINTER IN CALIFORNIA

Summer is yours, but mine the Winter drear;
You breathe the flower; I tread the snows;
Yet I, in spirit, from the sunset here
Shall pluck the crimson rose;

And oft in crystal meadows I shall wade
Through prism-colors of the sleet,—
Through briery upland pastures where each blade
Drops jewels round the feet;

To me will float the red-bird's whistle clear
From snow-bent branches of the fir,
And, footing through the thicket, I will hear
The startled pheasant whirr.

The wave-like snow-drifts by the straggling fence
Shall charm the sight, and seeing these,
In my imagination I shall sense
The surge of Arctic seas:

ON BEING INVITED TO WINTER IN CALIFORNIA

To me the mile-wide River which unfurls
Its skating surface to our ken,
With joyous bevies of our beauteous girls,
Will bring my youth again:

To me the Christmas holly in our dells
Will bend her scarlet berries low,
And moonlight laughter mixed with sleighing bells
Will drift across the snow:

Such slender consolation will be mine,
Brother, while we are kept apart,
Feeling, across the miles, my hand in thine,
Thy heart beside my heart.

D E F E A T E D

LIKE one he was who, bleeding from the strife,
Pleads at the Refuge-City's barriered gate;
His was a wound, made by the sword of Life,
Kept open by the thrusts of Fate.

Talent was his, and yet he could not brook
The stronger wing that reached the higher cloud;
And rather than be less, he rashly took
The life whose garland proved a shroud:

As though a star—some late-created World—
Angered at God because of lessened light,
Should dash itself to Chaos, and be hurled
Back into starless voids of night.

T H E R E L E N T L E S S O N E

ACROSS the West the angry clouds are torn,—
Their scattered fragments streak the livid sky;
On the wide river, by the blizzard borne,
The scudding white-caps fly.

Upon the eaves the cold has hung his spears
Where late the ivied sparrows held their choir;
Sharp on the bleak ridge of the hill appears
The dagger of the spire.

With wolf-pelts wrapped about his shaggy head,
And body swathed in pallid, arctic hides,
Lo, o'er the white, with stealthy, polar-tread,
The Savage,—Winter,—strides!

I M P R I S O N E D

THE sunny porch is with leaf-shadows strewn,
Where in forced leisure, I myself console,
Watching the birds about the wooded knoll:
The meadow-lark from some dim woodland flown
To plaint for me its old remembered tone;
The flying sunrise of the oriole;
Flickers whose harp is in each hollow bole;
And love, like sorrow, in the gray dove's moan.
But most I prize the oft returning wren,—
Whose pleasant racket used to haunt my door,—
That now in April, comes to me again:
Audacious Midget! that, if not in sight,
Sends her small shadow flying o'er the floor,
Builds as she chatters, while I strive to write.

AN EVENING AT LITITZ

BENEATH the trees the old swing's ample seat,
Freighted with maids demure, sways to and fro;
One maiden to herself sings soft and low,
And in the shadows here the stifling heat
Lessens, while by the public fountain, meet
Worn men, and tired horses, moving slow,
Yet eager for the cooling streams which flow
From yon blue hills beyond the fields of wheat.

While sinks the sun, the bending toilers move
Homeward along the quiet, leafy way;
And now the moon amid the boughs is hung:
It is the evening of the Sacred Play,
And the grave people gather in the grove,
Where the old Bible Story will be sung.

BEFORE DAYBREAK

THE snow-birds flutter in the shocks of corn
And loose the icy spangles in their flight;
The hamlet slumbers in the frosted morn
And all the roofs are white.

The sheeted steeples of the village stab
The pallid light above the coming glow,
While the hushed valley, lying dim and drab,
Pales with its pall of snow.

And high aloft, the crows, a hurrying crowd,
Catch, as they wing, the earliest glint of day,
Which tips the engine's upward-rolling cloud
Of elephantine gray.

But now the bright and all-revealing Sun
Our realm of mystery and dream invades,
Shatters the web which dearest Fancy spun
And lo, the glamour fades!

R E M B R A N D T

HUDSON-FULTON EXHIBITION—1909

NEW YORK

How slight, how vacuous all the moderns seem
By thy dark splendors! Lo, these works of thine
Have bridged oblivion, and thy name entwine
With fame eterne,—Lord of the brush supreme!
Others but limned the surface,—thy demesne—
The inviolate sanctum of the inner shrine:
Beneath the form thou saw'st the soul divine,
O painter of the Spirit's brooding Dream.
Artist beloved! who dawned so gloriously,
Thy star in sorrow set,—thy evening here
Was dimmed—neglect and penury thy part;
But Glory, bending, brings her palms to thee,
Poet, who in the lowliest human heart
Discerned the pathos and divined the tear.

THE WORLD'S TRANSIENT GUEST

He is not ours, for heaven has only lent
His presence here, whose heart is seamed with scars
Made by renunciations, and the wars
Waged with the World wherein the soul is pent.
He treads our paths, but still his gaze is bent
On Him whose glance through Chaos lit the stars.
These mortal years are but as prison-bars
That keep him from the skies in discontent.

He hears the cryptic clarion's far appeals
To scale the heights of being, and to drink
From founts that mystics only, have divined:
In trance, he trembles on the crystal brink
Of spirit revelation, while he feels
Immortal pinions springing in the mind.

“SHE WAS A BREATH OF SPRINGTIME”

SHE was a breath of springtime—

The violet’s dim perfume

She brought a sense of purity,

Of beauty and of bloom.

Her hair was as the chestnut,

Her cheek the mountain rose;

Her neck was like the lily white

That in seclusion grows.

She seemed of youth so vibrant

A joy to heart and eye—

To look at her, one scarce could think

Such loveliness could die.

“SHE WAS A BREATH OF SPRINGTIME”

But a sorrow fell upon me
When I saw her in her shroud,
As on the hills of summer
Falls the shadow of a cloud;

And when I think of all she was—
Her sweet and gentle ways,
Oh, the shadow darkly deepens
Round the sunset of my days!

SO SANG AN ENGLISH POET

THE Spring had come, and cherry-trees were white;
The lawn was vocal with their warbled words,—
That joyful trouble of the building birds,—
A garrulous music round each nesting site;
Yet I was sad, my mind on lost delight,
On death of loved ones and on Youth grown old;
And said, as flickers rose on wings of gold:—
“So blessings brighten as they take their flight”!

Thus once an English poet, not in vain,—
Sang of the pathos of the parting pain,
His voice all tremulous with unbidden tears:
Alas! how few things of our twilight day
Grow golden as they fade from us away,—
Enaureoled by the consuming years.

BALBOA IN PANAMA

1513 A. D.

ALONE I reach the summit,—Has the glare
Dazzled my sight, or am I stunned and dazed?
Can yon wide plain be water? God be praised!—
An Ocean! 'tis an Ocean—blue as air!
Flash forth the swords! Let the shrill bugle blare!
Plant here our flag that never shall be razed.
Bring up my men,—the sick—the fever-crazed:
Now Comrades, doff the casque and kneel in prayer.
For, by my faith, our day's work in this zone
Makes us immortal. Fame shall trumpet me
Beyond the meager verges of the Known.
So, from this peak, in proud humility,
This vast wave-turquois—this cerulean sea—
Gem-like, I lay before España's throne.

THE SHADOWY CITY LOOMS

NEW YORK FROM THE NORTH RIVER

In deepening shades the haunting vision swims:
A denser grayness settles o'er the stream;
The domes are veiled; the wondrous City dims—
Dims as a dream:

The night transforms it to a palace vast
Lit with a thousand lamps from cryptic wires;
The vaporous walls are phantoms of the Past,
Strange with vague spires:

Huge, peopled monoliths that touch the skies,
Whose indeterminate bases baffle sight;
Each with its Argus, incandescent eyes
Pierces the night:

THE SHADOWY CITY LOOMS

Undreamt-of heights of glimmering marble loom
Like some enchanted fabric wrought of air;
Gigantic shafts of insubstantial gloom
Lift, shadowy, there:

Could fabled Camelot of the poet's dream
Surpass these towers soaring from the mist?—
These steel-ribbed granite miracles that gleam
Dim amethyst? . . .

Slow on the tide, from murky coves remote,
The freighted barges move, laboriously,
While some palatial, golden-lighted boat
Stems for the sea:

THE SHADOWY CITY LOOMS

Now that the moon is breaking through the cloud
The radiant halo o'er the city pales;
Shimmer the dusky wharves with mast and shroud
And furled sails:

Soft strains of music, hovering, drift away;
In cloudy turrets toll the spectral bells;
While the sea-voices, from the wastes of gray,
Send faint farewells:

The homing sloops are sheltered in the slip;
The silence deepens; and up-stream, afar,
A fading lantern on an anchored ship
Seems a lost star.

“AS EVENING LOWERS”

AND was it true, or but some splendid dream—
That pageant of the dawn, whose glittering spears
Routed the cohorts of ephemeral fears,
Throning proud Youth triumphant and supreme?
Why did no trumpet's monitory scream
Warn us of wounds, and of the surge of tears?
Ah, now, as evening lowers, and twilight nears,
How faint and far those fields of morning seem!

Well, let the fair auroral phantoms go;
We thank the mirage that it led to light;
We thank defeat for these resplendent scars:
Now, after sunset—night, but through the night,
Shall not the dreamer in the darkness know
The solace and communion of the stars?

A SONG BY THE MISTY SEA

O THE glare of the sun on the dazzling waves
And the blinding line of white,—
They are not for me, for the spirit craves
The lure of the lessened light.

When the evening dies to a flower of gray,
Or the lily of morning pales;
When the mist comes drifting over the Bay
To shroud the moving sails;

When the dunes grow dim as the wing of the gulls
That flit o'er the ashen sea;
When the grayness grows and the glory dulls—
Ah, that is the time for me!

— THEN DEATH REPLIED

O THROBBING Life! away beyond the strife,—
Beyond the toil, when all the dream is o'er,—
 What shall betide?
Shall effort end in mystery and fear,
 As foot-prints, leading to a river wide,
That show their impress on the nearer shore
 But disappear
And are not found upon the farther side?
 Then Death to me replied;
But of his utterance, veiled, I could not hear
 Or understand a tithe,
Because of the insatiate roar
 Made by his ruthless scythe.

A WAYSIDE WEED IN BLOOM

MUSING, I said, "Now that the summer's blaze
Has dimmed the teeming blossoms of the meads
And dulled the lilies by the lyric reeds,
Few flowers are left. Barren are all the ways."
Then, 'mid a straggling growth of browns and grays,
The blue of heaven bloomed—weed among weeds—
Yet pure delight it brought me, and I needs
Must claim it as a Flower through all my days.

O spirit of April in the fading year—
Sweet harbinger of far celestial birth!
Thou bear'st a message we may not ignore,
For while the tiger Hates of Europe roar,
Thou, by thine azure, bring'st the sky anear,
To show a little of heaven is still on earth.

OF AN AGED POET

Now, the Poet olden
Sings no more his song;—
Like a shrunken brooklet
Mute he moves along;

Like a Winter garden
When its work is done,—
All the beds and borders
Bloomless in the sun;

But in regions fairer,
By the lilded streams,
Many a margin trembles
To his lyric dreams.

S A P P H O T O P H A O N

ON THE LESBIAN HEADLAND

[*SAPPHIC*]

WE TOGETHER, high o'er the shadowy water,
Thou and I—the wings of the sea-gulls near us,—
Smoulder with love;—I am the burning daughter
Favored of Eros.

Lovely Phaon! ah, thou art fairer, younger;
Such the barbed spear darted by Time to hurt me;
Wearied at last; sick of my endless hunger,
Thou wilt desert me.

Then a maiden, dove-like and humbly duteous,
She, ah, some day, she with her bloom will take thee;
Were I fair as Venus, or still more beauteous
Thou wouldst forsake me!

Better to leap far in the depths of ocean,
Sheer from cliff-edge down to the dreaded Kraken,
There to forget utterly all emotion,
Than live forsaken!

TIMOTHY COLE, ENGRAVER

ARTIST, whose life with rare production teems,
Beneath thy burin how the picture glows!
The painter's work, oft fading as the rose,
Blooms on thy block again, and mirrored seems.
From Raphael's grace to Rembrandt's shadowy gleams,
A sumptuous pageant still thy genius shows,—
The long procession eminent, that goes
Adown the glimmering gallery of Dreams.
Old Dürer would have ta'en thee to his heart:
Thy work—a beacon on the hills of Fame;
Though richly laureled, let our tribute wreath
Thy brow, O master of the graver's art,
As we, who worship Beauty, place thy name
First among those who make the box-wood breathe.

WHEN LOVE WAS BORN

AFTER the morning and the evening blushed
Obedient to His rod,
'Twas then the daring thought of Adam flushed
The veiled brow of God;

But ere the maiden-mother of the race
In His mind lay unfurled,
Whose beauty, later, for a moment's space
Made God forget His world,

The sullen Earth was as an iron lyre
With leaden chords forlorn;
The air was empty of all tense desire,—
E'en Hope had not been born:

Then she, whose coming thrilled the ether through
Where all before was dearth,
Dropt like a roseate star in Eden dew—
And Love was on the Earth.

WILLIAM UHLER HENSEL

OBIT. FEBRUARY, 1915

WHAT shall we say of him whose words of weight
Swayed his rapt hearers, and whose Attic phrase
Charmed at the board all guests in happier days?
'Tis now "Bleak House" indeed! —where once, elate,
He showered hospitality, till fate
Called him beyond the chorus of our praise—
Him whose broad intellect, in a thousand ways,
Brought honor to his region and the State.
The highest eulogies, when all is said,
Are futile still, and show him but in part,
Yet I would pay some homage to the dead:
Let me, recalling through that life of stress
The unfailing fountain of his kindness,
Offer *my* tribute to his golden heart.

ON THE WINTER PORCH

THE chill rain ended, gloomy was the world;
No beauty dwelt within the leaden hours;
And then a change,—the gorgeous sinking sun,
So truly mirrored on the dripping porch,
Transformed the floor to some resplendent lake
Of aureate refulgence. Through that gold
I walked, as on a solid sea, and saw
God shower His jewels of the Apocalypse—
Spalls from the twelve foundations radiant—
Within the burning furnace of the West,
Where all these molten gems, there fusing, blazed
Unutterable splendor Then the Day
Paled unto death, yet on her Phœnix-pyre
The embers crimsoned with the dream of Dawn

THE PREMONITION

A SPIRIT touched me as I slept, and said:
“I hear the Host of Desolation choir
The dirge for kingdoms that shall soon expire;
Portents of ill resound, and thunders dread:
Moans of the wounded, prayers for legions dead;
Crash of cathedrals, roar of towns afire;
Reft sweethearts wailing o'er the burial pyre;
And grief of orphans by wan mothers led.

Peace, with her bleeding wings, flew off afar,
Above the oceans dimmed with battle smoke;
I heard her weeping for this world of woe;
‘Poor, purblind world,’ she wept.” Then I awoke,
And, yearning, asked, “Oh, when shall rise His star,
That trembled over Bethlehem long ago?”

CÆDMON

HIGH on the cliff the monastery gleamed;
Far off there lay the glimmer of the sea;
And on the rolling headland, musingly,
The cowherd, Cædmon, watched a cloud and dreamed;
A poet mute he was, whose lips still seemed
Untouched by fire divine,—but, suddenly,
Song surged within him to an ecstasy,
Flamed in his soul, and forth the numbers streamed.

Thou Saxon Bard! silent so many a day,
Who lauded Man and Nature in thy lay,
Rise from thy crypt, and in o'erwhelming wrath
Scathe our degenerate World—a world of graves,—
Whose human harvest shows one scarlet path,
While dreadful Death incarnadines the waves.

YE VENGEFUL KINGS

WHEN Death, the silent, to the world descends
With muffled wings, the aged hear their knell;
"After Life's fitful fever they sleep well,"
For aged life and Death have long been friends:
But when a slaughtering Nation, heartless, sends
The flower of Youth to face War's furious hell,—
Youth, made for hope and love,—oh, who shall tell
The pang and after-anguish this portends!
Youth, the beloved of heaven,—the precious rose
Most beauteous in the garden of the world,
The crowning glory from the hand of God;
Ye vengeful Kings! mark how the red stream flows,
And cower to think—your war-flags still unfurled—
With what inviolate blood you stain the sod!

THE CRIMSON SWATH

I HEAR a threnode sweep the skies of war
Where great archangels from the void of night
Drop pitying tears, as soft they take their flight,
Above the vanquished and the conqueror.

The charnel trenches reek with clotted gore.
The rose of Earth—dear Youth—now dies in fight;
The Heart of Mercy shudders at the sight,
And frenzied Europe seems one abattoir.

The storming bugles scarce begin to blow,
And yet the quivering grass is crimson-steeped,
And mangled legions will in anguish writhe;
Man trembles at immeasurable woe,
As on the mad World's scarlet field is heaped
The swath of Death's insatiable scythe!

TO PHILADELPHIANS DURING THE BELGIAN
RELIEF CAMPAIGN

As some rich Baron on a wintry shore,
Standing 'mid coffers bulging with his gold,
And with great argosies of wealth untold,
Hears, oversea, their anguish who implore
Aid ere they starve, then straightway from his store
Supplies their wants, yet heeds not his own fold,—
His famished people huddled in the cold,—
Nor feels the destitution at his door;
So ye, rich givers to an alien land,
With princely hoard of silver and of wheat,
Sent grain-ships far across the ocean foam;
Freely you gave, nor saw the bread-line stand
Famished and shivering on your city street,
Nor knew Beneficence begins at home.

THE EMERGENCY AID COMMITTEE OF
PHILADELPHIA

BUT now your City, in the spirit of Penn,
Comes to the rescue with unfaltering zeal;
Your noble women make their strong appeal
Unto the pitying tenderness of men;
Rich purses open, and the citizen
Pours out his bounty for the commonweal;
Ah, Quaker City! now, in you, we feel
The Good Samaritan has come again!
To-day you succor first your own oppressed,
And when your people wake, relief is sure;
Children, with timid faces filled with light,
Drop in the tube their little hoarded mite;
And e'en the needy come with coin—thrice blessed
Who give to others while themselves are poor!

THE WAR AGAINST CIVILIZATION

OUR pity for the ignorant soldier slain
In reeking swaths before the cannonade;
For all the thoughtless ranks, by shell and blade
Strewn by the thousands on the sickening plain;
This is but cause for mitigable pain;
But, Oh, the dreadful movement retrograde!
Grief for the world's great thinkers unafraid,—
The decimation of the men of brain!
True heroes of the Kingdom of the Mind,
For loss of these the world with woe is fraught;
This vanguard of the millions; they who seek
Progress, and betterment of all mankind;
Who, eager on the Future's frontier peak,
With golden clarions sound the march of thought;

ULTIMATE BROTHERHOOD

SHALL Force alone enslave the World anew?

Now man no longer listens to the Word,
But serves the red puissance of the Sword:
Our million-slaying Masters—they who drew
This horror on us,—make the cave-man's crew

Seem beatific; but can we afford
To turn the world into a slaughter-horde,
And to our long advancement bid adieu?
Ah, Peace, at last shall bear her perfect flower;
With faith in Man's great Brotherhood, re-nerved
We stand, foreseeing victory for the soul;
Though Russia, with Enceladean power,
Like some stupendous glacier, unobserved,
Move through the centuries, to her baleful goal.

THE PROGRESS OF PEACE

THE cannon roared, and deafening was the sound,
When that grim Rider of the Pale Horse led
The plunging squadrons till their hoofs were red.
Where the charged wires left a heaping mound
Of writhing wounded, there the Gatlings ground
Infernal horror, and with fury fed
The maw of Havoc; then, in awful dread,
The wounded saw the surgeons probe the wound.
The ocean mine the armored ship benumbs,
And lydite shells, with suffocating breath,
Swirl the crews down in agony untold:
The sea,—a wandering cave of prowling bombs;
The air,—a flying arsenal of death;
And man,—the “food for powder,” as of old.

MIDNIGHT AT THE TOMB OF GRANT

RIVERSIDE DRIVE, N. Y.

O WARRIOR, art thou troubled in thy tomb
As far off cannon-thunders reach thine ear?
Thy very dust should quiver now to hear
The anguish rising where the death-clouds loom:
O generous Victor, in that marble gloom,—
Thou who spoke seldom,—from that dwelling drear
Speak thou with clarion tone,—proclaim it clear
That hell-born Carnage now shall meet its doom:
Rise from thy crypt to mount thy phantom steed,
And like some ghostly and gigantic Knight
Throned on this summit in the moon's weird light,
Let thy voice sound across encrimsoned seas;
Warn the mad World, and with the Nations plead
For lasting concord—universal peace!

LANDSEER'S PAINTING—"PEACE"

Lo! Time hath soothed the headland with its green;
The olden fortress crumbles on the steep;
Far off the dim sea lies in halcyon sleep,
Forgetting all the slaughter it hath seen.

Here, with her child the mother rests serene,
Where languid Evening folds her drowsy sheep;
Here Peace abides, as when, in cloisters deep,
The latria rises round the Nazarene.

Lands where our rugged forbears first drew breath!
In this red slaughter, this, your hour extreme,—
We pray for peace from out the North and South:
When shall be sheathed the crimson blade of Death?
When shall the lambs—as in the painter's dream—
Nibble the blossoms from the cannon's mouth?

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENT

FAIR cities tremble as war's æroplane
Crashes cathedrals with the plunging shell;
Now the sweet heavens are turned to skies of hell,
Gomorrah-like, with sheets of fiery rain.
All Europe, agonizing, groans in pain:
The mangled glut the trenches; where' they fell
No churchyard waits the dead,—no immortelle,—
Since harvest-fields are heaped with patriot-slain.
There, where the battery swerved in frantic speed,
Lay shrieking wounded, mashed by hoof and wheel;
Mercy for them?—Yes, from the bayonet-steel!
Death, gloating, hovers o'er the battle brunt;
Slaughter *en masse!* and then, the charnel need,—
Long trains of quick-lime hurried to the front.

THE GOD OF BATTLES

EACH warring nation importunes Thy throne
With fervent prayer, storming th' inviolate gates;
Lo! at the shrine the suppliant priest awaits
Thy favor to his country—his alone.
Only to Thee the victor is foreknown:
Yet though the prayer from Emperors, Kings and States
Rises like incense, the unheeding Fates,
Austere, weave on with obdurate hearts of stone.
Still o'er the battle Death's gray wings descend,
Awful with scarlet, and our cherished dreams
Of Peace dissolve . . . We pause in numbed suspense:
Baffled we gaze; we cannot comprehend
A God who views the carnage, and yet seems
The Spirit of supreme Indifference.

THE AWAKENING

WHAT occult alchemy the brown Earth shows
As Spring is coming! and the Spirit waits
The gorgeous opening of the ruby gates
That flood the world with blossoms like the rose:
With jonquils rich as sunset when it glows
Golden amid dim clouds, for Earth creates
From lowliest things, Beauty that never sates,
But flowers her lonely path where e'er she goes.

And they whose torch of life is burning low,—
Whom fate has left along the desolate road,—
Whom Youth and Love deserted long ago,
E'en these, as May returns, lift up their load
Almost with hope,—ignoring even pain,—
And with strange faith look forward once again.

INSATIATE MONSTER

AGAIN we hear thy stirring bugles blow,
O god of Battles! Now the sands are red
Where treachery strews the desert with our dead,
And dying throats are parched in Mexico;
Was not our War—that deep fraternal blow—
When brothers' blood for conscience sake was shed—
Whence countless Youth in countless thousands bled—
Was not that crime an all-sufficient Woe?

Demon of battles! is thy maw not filled
With old-world slaughter, that thy jaws, accurst,
Lust for our ranks as tigers roar for food?
Insatiate art thou till all men are killed?
Monster, forbear! nor slake thy crimson thirst
On peaceful fields untainted now by blood!

June 28, 1916

A G E

O KEEP a little longer far away,
Ye hurrying months, onrushing, and ye years;
Touch not our temples with your saddening gray,
Give us some time for smiling through our tears!

Keep from our locks your devastating shears;
And if we must forget, ah, well-a-day!
Let us forget old sorrows and old fears,
And let our hearts remember but the May.

Ah, age, dread age, how little dost thou bring!
E'en as far off thou com'st, thy presence fills
The soul with apprehension of thine ills:—
Cold strips of life left to us, lingering
Like those drear streaks of Winter seen in Spring—
Soiled snowdrifts on the northern side of hills.

MORITURI SALUTAMUS

IN leafless woods, when the first sap of Spring
Tingles within the branches, bare and drear,
The Beech still holds its foliage, pale and sere,—
The myriad leaves that all-defiant cling;
Days warmer grow; arrive the song and wing;
Then on the Beech th' exultant buds appear,
Forcing the old leaves off,—their fate is clear;
And life-scarred hearts shrink from this hinted thing.

The fierce impulsion of the bud, insooth,
Dashes our dream of perpetuity;
We dreamt we were immutable, but now
We feel the new leaves push us from the bough:
Proud in defeat, we flash these words at Youth:
“Lo! we salute you, we, about to die!”

TO THE SPIRIT OF POËSY

SPIRIT serene, that ever com'st to me
With soul-refreshing, purifying power,
Teach me the language I may speak to thee,
Here in the holy hush of evening's hour.
Then let me tell how once I burned to grace
Thy forehead with some lyric trophy meet,
And now regret that I can only place
A garland so unworthy at thy feet!

*From *Lyrics* by J. Houston Mifflin, 1835*

NOTES

PAGE

7. Blank verse in sonnet-form, on Tennyson's death.
8. The peculiar sea-like effect of rolling slopes of waving rye has never, to my knowledge, been adequately painted. The sight is a most beautiful one, and I have captured it in verse many times.
16. From the Mid-West Quarterly, to which credit is here given for permission to reprint.
18. A sonnet with a refrain.
20. My Peach-Orchard in bloom.
22. The curves of a stream tend to conserve its banks.
25. After much discussion the Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia Latifolia*) was not accepted as the State Flower of Pennsylvania.
29. Published in the Century Magazine with an illustration of Rinehart's grave-stone, in Baltimore. Credit and thanks for permission to reprint are here tendered the Century Company.
36. Written July, 1916.
37. Perhaps it may be well to state that the Author never visited Japan.
40. Blank verse in sonnet-form.
47. The Locust Tree has been ignored in American painting and poetry. I have several times written of its peculiar beauty and fragrance when in bloom.
67. Stanzas after the death of a dear sister.

N O T E S

PAGE

71. This poem appeared in Scribner's Magazine, credit, and thanks for permission to reprint are here given.

77. The blue chickory—(*Chicorium Intybus*). Inscribed to the late William Uhler Hensel.

84. Here follow a few sonnets from a series on the present European War. The series was soon abandoned, as the horrors grew too terrible to contemplate.

85. The Abbey enclosing the tomb of Cædmon, the first Anglo-Saxon Poet, located near Scarborough, England, was bombarded by the Germans during the present war.

98. A Sonnet on our threatened war with Mexico—dated June 28, 1916.

Acknowledgment is made to the New Era, of Lancaster, to the New York Evening Mail and to the Philadelphia Public Ledger, for permission to reprint certain of these War Sonnets which appeared in their columns;—and to all other Journals and Magazines which may have published the Author's poems. The Author begs that any neglect of direct acknowledgment will be attributed solely to oversight.

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